

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS  
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/7/11 12:00 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Berea College (U411C110137)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	17
<b>Total</b>	20	17

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 4: 84.411C

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Berea College (U411C110137)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:
  - (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
  - (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.
  - (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Note:** We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation

- (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and
- (2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

### Strengths:

The evaluation narrative was organized around the evaluation criteria, which greatly assisted in piecing together the plan. ECG is the evaluation contractor, and the ECG evaluators are qualified to perform the external evaluation. There is a good description of ECG's experience working in Kentucky on page 29. Performance feedback to the project staff will be completed via written reports on a quarterly and annual basis. Page 22 indicates that discussions of the data, methods, and analysis will be done at this time, which will allow opportunities for project staff to inquire and reflect on progress and plan for any mid-course changes. A pre/post quasi-experimental design will be implemented to compare treatment and control groups. The use of propensity score matching will be done to insure valid group comparability and a good discussion of the meaning of that procedure is found on page 24. Additional statistical controls will be used as needed to mitigate threats to selection bias. The impact evaluation questions are clear and relevant to the project. There is a good discussion of the need rationale for the five schools representing the treatment group. A thorough explanation of the measures and data collection methods which will be used are found on pages 25-26. The evaluation budget is about 8 percent of total budget, which should provide enough financial resources to conduct the evaluation.

### Weaknesses:

It would have been helpful to extend that logic model found on page 14 to include evaluation activities for each outcome. ECG will develop all evaluation instruments, including surveys, personal interviews, and other implementation instruments. However, there is no indication about how those instruments will be obtained or developed. It is not clear how the impact evaluation questions will be answered by the quasi-experimental design. The analytic strategy described on page 27 is clear except that it does not explain how the analyses will determine program effects from the quasi-experimental design, since group assignment was not indicated as one of the study variables.

**Reader's Score:** 17

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 10/7/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Berea College (U411C110137)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	14
<b>Total</b>	20	14

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 4: 84.411C

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Berea College (U411C110137)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Note:** We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation

(1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and

(2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

### Strengths:

The applicant has found an evaluation partner with relevant experience and credentials. The evaluator is well qualified and has experience with the state and the population served (as documented on page 29). The financial resources allotted for the external evaluation are adequate in absolute dollar terms, and as a proportion of the overall project budget..

Needs assessment data links logically with the evaluation data. Similar measures and constructs are used to document need as are used to assess the impact of the program upon areas of need. This approach provides a direct illustration of the degree to which program outcomes change identified areas of need.

The sample size is large enough for the detection of program effects. As described at the bottom of page 23, the evaluation will be based on a sample of nearly 3,000 project students and the same number of matched comparison students.

Data will be used on a regular basis for formative feedback. As described on page 15, development of the program will be driven by data that is collected in the early years of the project. The use of formative data in a proactive manner increases the likelihood that the program will address initial barriers to effective implementation and attain the goals of the program. The formative data provide documentation of the way that the program was carried out that may be of use to other sites that want to replicate this project.

Propensity scoring is an acceptable way to deal with lack of random assignment. The criteria used to compute propensity scores, and to match students, are described in detail on the bottom of page 24. The use of propensity scoring and matching will reduce the potential confounding of program effects with differences in students' background characteristics. Specific information about the way in which the propensity score analysis is provided in pages 26-27. The statistical controls proposed in these pages are rigorous.

The data collection procedures are described well. The timeline shown on page 28 shows a logical and realistic progression of data analysis. Additional information on the collection of formative data is provided on pages 20-21.

Appendix D provides promising evidence that the program impacts the intended outcomes of the project, and

provides credible evidence that project staff have experience in carrying out quality research on the impact of the program.

**Weaknesses:**

Granted that the propensity score analysis is an acceptable way to control for students' background differences, it is unclear how the evaluation will assess equity effects of the intervention (i.e., effects that alter the strength of the relationship between background characteristics and achievement).

The evaluation focuses on achievement and AP course taking, but little data is collected on processes by which the program helps students to attain these objectives. A logic model relating the intervention to outcomes would have been helpful.

There is not enough discussion about how measures (other than achievement) will be developed. The applicants may want to consider utilizing instruments that have already been validated to the extent possible. Illustratively, existing measures can be employed to measure the impact of program participation on students' academic aspirations and expectations with regard to post-secondary education.

**Reader's Score:** 14

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